

CHURCH-POWER, by our Constitution, placed
wholly in the Civil Magistrate, and not at all
in the Convocation.

T H E
DISSENTING GENTLEMAN'S
P O S T S C R I P T
To his three LETTERS to Mr. WHITE;
C O N T A I N I N G
R E M A R K S on his APPENDIX.

In which also are further consider'd,

The Sacramental Test; The Affair of Mr. Whiston's Censure; The Consecration of Churches.

Thou art not Cæsar's Friend. JOHN xix. 12.

The Weapons of our Warfare are mighty through God, to the pulling down strong Holds, casting down Imaginations.
2 COR. x. 4, 5.



L O N D O N:

Printed for J. Noon, at the *White Hart* near *Mercer's Chapel*,
Cheapside. MDCCL.



T H E

Dissenting Gentleman's

POSTSCRIPT, &c.

S I R,

TH E extraordinary Remark which introduces your *Appendix* — That Views of *worldly Interest* encourage and support our *Dissent* from the Establishment — I shall leave to the universal Laugh of your Readers, for a Confutation ; and pass on to Points of greater Moment in Debate. — To begin with your *first*. Of CHURCH-POWER, *and in whom lodged*.

The Church of *E—d* claims, in her *Articles* and *Canons* * from GOD, to decree OTHER Ceremonies and Rites of Worship, and to make OTHER Terms of Christian Communion than either Christ or his Apostles ever made or decreed ; and to have Authority in Controversies of Faith.

This high and important Power she sovereignly exerts : You, as her zealous Advocate, endeavour to support her in it ; and charge all the *Dissenters* as guilty of a very crying and dangerous Sin, in not submitting thereto. The *Dissenters*, I have told you, will readily own the Charge, and return immediately to your Church, if you will gratify them in these two most reasonable Requests. 1st, Tell them plainly, WHO,

* Art. xx, and Can. xxvii, xxix, xxx.

and what it is, you mean by the CHURCH ? And, 2. Prove it, to have this Power vested in it by GOD.

Your Advocates for Church-Power, I know, love always to deal in Generals ; and will twist a thousand Ways, rather than explain their Scheme, and be forced to speak out : But you, Sir, being a Gentleman of singular Intrepidity ; and affecting to do Things in, what you call, a Soldierly Manner, when your late Appendix came forth, protesting to treat expressly of Church-Power, and in whom lodg'd ; I hoped to see the Point, all Disguises apart, openly and frankly handled ; and that a certain Judgment might now be formed what your Sentiments were. But, alas, vain were these Hopes ! Not all the Invitations and Provocations I have used, can draw you from the Darkness where you artfully lurk. Tho' the Regard you owe to Truth, to Justice, to the Souls of your Dissenting Brethren, and to your own Reputation, most strongly obliged you to it ; yet you have not, durst not honestly and fairly tell us — who the Persons are whom GOD hath trusted with this Power ; nor have produced the least Shadow of a Charter from Heaven, investing them with it.

In most manifest Contradiction, indeed, to our Constitution ; our Laws ; our Articles and Canons, to which you have solemnly sworn and subscribed ; and even to your very SELF (as I shall presently shew) you continue to affirm — “ That this Power is NOT AT ALL in the Civil Magistrate ; that he hath declared and recognised it not to be in himself ; but is solely in the Pastors and Governors of the Church.” — But when I once and again press and provoke you to say, who these Governors and Pastors are — Are they the Archbishops ; or the Bishops ; or the Deans and Chapters of every Diocese ; or the Priest in every Parish ; or the Clergy met in Convocation ? — You are sour, and will not answer. No, if Dissenters must have these knotty Points solved, let them seek it from other Hands. —

But

But what Idea, Sir, will the Public form of a Scholar, a Divine, a some-time Fellow of a learned College, arraigning us before its Bar, as guilty of *bigb Crimes* in not submitting to *Church-Power*; writing Tract upon Tract to persuade and seduce us to it; coming forth with an *Appendix* professing to treat expressly of *Church-Power* and in whom lodg'd; and yet, with all this Parade, not capable of being induced to say—*who it is* he means by these *Pastors* and *Governors*, to whom, under Peril of everlasting Damnation, we are bound to submit.

I observe, you rank your self with the *Learned*, and claim *Precedence* amongst them. — “ *I, and another learned Gentleman ** ” (*Ego, & Rex meus*) But will not the *Learned* disclaim you; and treat your Lucubrations as an egregious Impertinence; who can thus double and evade, and meanly refuse to speak to the one single Point, on which they all see the whole Controversy turns? Must not all your pretended Charity; and Lamentation over our *straying Souls*, appear to an high Degree ridiculous, and perfect Grimace? *Dissenters* dangerously sin, in rejecting a *Power* ordained by Almighty GOD: They profess themselves ready to yield it Submission, if shewn where it is: Mr. *White*, their pretended Friend, knows the grand Secret; but no Prayers can wrest it from him; he is cloſe and demure; and leaves them to wonder on, and sin, and perish in the Dark.

But to examine your romantic Scheme, as far as Conjecture can pick it out.—The Church's *Pastors* and *Governors* are ALONE posſess'd, you say, of this Power. By its *Governors*, 'tis presumed, you mean its *Bishops*; and by *Pastors*, its *Priests*. Every Parish *Priest* then, (your good SELF, Sir, amongst the rest) and every *Bishop* of this Land, is vested with this *bigb Power*: viz. a Power of *Decreeing OTHER Rites and Ceremonies* in Divine Worship, and of *Injoining OTHER Terms of Christian Communion*, than either CHRIST or his *Apostles* decreed or injoin'd; and of *Pronouncing*

* Appendix. Page 37.

AUTHORITATIVELY in Controversies of Faith. This you will note carefully, is the *Power* in Dispute betwixt us. This the *Power* which your Church exerts: This the *Power* you claim for her; and which you affirm is vested *solely*, (if I understand your Scheme) in its *Bishops* and *Priests*.

But, pray, give me Leave to ask—How do they possess it! *separately* or *conjointly*? It must be one of these. Has *every Priest* within his *Parish*; and *every Bishop* within his *Dioceſe*, a *Right* to exercise this *Power*, *separately* and *apart* from others? Or, must they assemble in common *Council*, and by joint *Suffrage* and *Consent* issue forth their Determinations; to which the Consciences of all the Faithful are bound to submit? Not *separately* and *apart*, 'tis presumed you will say, but in *Convocation* convened.

Accordingly, you lay, I observe, a mighty Stress upon the *CONVOCATION'S Consent* to the *Act of Uniformity*, and the present establish'd Forms; and seem to represent *this* as that which alone gave *Authority* to both; and that as long as this *Consent* of the *Convocation* was withheld (as for a considerable Time it was) so long the Reformation “ was a Measure not quite *canonical* nor *ecclesiastically right* — That it was a going “ a little awry into ſome *illegal* or *extra-legal* Ways — “ That the King's Supremacy, on that Occasion, was “ raised to an *undue Height*, and ſuch as *ought not* to be “ drawn into Example at other Times — That moft, “ if not all, the Reviews and Alterations which have “ been ſince made, have been made by the *Bishops* “ and *Clergy*; in, or by the *Authority*, or with the “ Concurrence of the *Convocation* (your great Mistake, “ here, you will preſently ſee) and if our *Governors* “ ſhall at any Time think fit to ſubject it, to any other “ Alterations or Reviews, you will not ſuffer yourſelf “ to doubt, but they will be made by *ecclesiastical* and “ even *synodal Authority*, before the *civill Sanction* be “ added to them *.”

The *Authority* of the *Convocation* is, I ſee, the *Phantom* that haunts your Mind, and has *distorted* ſtrangely

your Thoughts, on this Subject of *Church-Power*. I will candidly endeavour your Illumination on this Point; as I have the Satisfaction to hope, I have, not without good Effect, attempted it on some other.

Before you had taken on you, Sir, to write about *Church-Power*, you ought to have known — That, by the Constitution and Laws of *England*, the *Convocation* is really no Part of its *Government*; no Branch of its *Ruling-Powers*; has no Share of its *Legislative Authority* at all. To be amply convinc'd of this, I shall lead you to Authorities which you will have no *Courtenance* nor *Power*, however strong your *Inclination* may be, to contest. To some great ones, in the *Law*, you have already been directed *, which you have (and with good Reason) *not* presumed to dispute. Turn your Attention, now, to some of your own *Bishops*, the Ornament, the Supports, the Glory of your Church: Who were honoured with the first Rank among those *Pastors* and *Governors*, with whom *alone* you declare *Church-Power* is lodged.

A Gentleman of your Condition hath, no doubt, heard, at least, of the Writings of those venerable Names *Burnet*, *Kennet*, *Nicholson*, *Hody*, and particularly *Wake*, your late excellent Archbishop, on this Subject of the *Convocation*.

A due Attention to their learned *Researches* on this Point, will effectually ease your Mind of the Errors it labours under. From the *last* of these great Persons, I shall present you with a few *Extracts*, to set right your Misapprehensions as to the real Constitution and Nature of your *Church*; which you seem (excuse my Freedom) extremely unacquainted with, and not at all to understand.

To root up, and destroy for ever, the dangerous Absurdity of *two* independent Powers (i. e. the Power you are claiming for your *Pastors* and *Governors*, independent of the *Civil Magistrate*) the Wisdom of our Legislature hath enacted and decreed, “by the Statute “*25 Henry VIII.* called the *Act of SUBMISSION*.

* *Dissent*, Gent. 1 Letter, Page 13.

" 1st. That the *Convocation* should from thenceforth
 " be assembled only by the *King's Writ*. 2dly. That
 " it should make no *Canons* or *Constitutions* but by Vir-
 " tue of the *King's Licence*, first given them, so to do.
 " 3dly. That having agreed on any *Canons* or *Consti-*
tutions, they should yet neither *publish* nor *execute*
 " them, without the *King's Confirmation* of them:
 " Nor, 4thly. By *his Authority*, execute any, but with
 " these Limitations; that they be neither against the
 " *King's Prerogative*, nor against any *Common* or *Sta-*
tute Law; nor, finally, in any other Respect con-
 " trary to the *Customs* of the Realm." Vid. *Wake's*
Appeal, &c. Page 4.

The learned *Metropolitan* further informs you * —

" That Christian Princes have a Right; and from
 " Constantine the Great, down thro' succeeding Ages,
 " have exerted the Right; not only of exercising Au-
 " thority over *Ecclesiastical Persons*, but to interpose
 " in ordering *Ecclesiastical Affairs* — That when
 " the *Civil Magistrate* advised with the Clergy about
 " calling a *Synod*, it was not look'd upon as a Matter
 " of *Right*; but that he often called *Synods* without
 " such Advice: And when the Bishops have ear-
 " nestly desired a *Council*, and it has been refused by
 " the *Magistrate*, they have submitted, and not rec-
 " kon'd themselves to have a *Right* to meet without his
 " *Leave* — When a *Synod* was resolved on, the *Prince*
 " determin'd, or allow'd, the Time and Place of
 " Meeting, and what *Persons* should come to them
 " — When *Synods* are assembled, he shews, the
 " *Civil Magistrate* has a Right to prescribe the *Matters*
 " on which they are to debate; as also the *Manner*
 " and *Method* of their Proceedings in them; and, if
 " he pleases, to sit in, and preside over them; or to
 " appoint his *Commissioner* to do it in his Stead. (Thus
 " Ld. *Cromwell*, a Lay Person, sat in, and presided
 " over the *Convocation* for the *King*, *Hen. VIII.*) They
 " cannot *dissolve* themselves, nor *depart* from Council
 " but by the *King's Licence* — Their Definitions are

* *Wake's Authority of Christian Princes, &c.* Page 10.

" no further obligatory, than as ratified and confirm'd
 " by Civil Authority.—That the Prince is not
 " obliged to confirm whatever the Clergy shall think
 " fit to determine; but has a Power of annulling and
 " rejecting what they have done; to alter or improve,
 " to add to or take from it.—He denies the *in-*
herent Authority of the Church to make any Syno-
dical authoritative Definitions; or that the sitting of
Convocations is any Right of the Church.—And
 says, that as even the King's *Licence* cannot give the
Convocative Authority to promulge or execute any
Canons, but what are agreeable to the *Customs* and
Laws of the Realm; so he ought to submit them to
 the Examination of his Council *learned in the Law*;
 " by them to be *advised*, whether they are thus agree-
 able, before he confirms them *."

So that the *Convocation*, you see, are not so much as
 the King's *Supreme Council* in *ecclesiastical Affairs*.
 There are *others* who are to judge *after* them; to sit as
 a Check *above* them; to inspect, controul, approve or
 reject the *Advice* they give the King; even his Council
learned in the Law.

The Archbishop adds——“ That as the King has
 “ Power, without a *Convocation*, to make and publish
 “ such Injunctions as *HE shall think* the Necessities of
 “ the Church to require, and to *command* the Observ-
 “ ance of them: So he may, with the Advice and
 “ Consent of his Parliament much more, (i. e. I ap-
 “ prehend, he may *without*, much more *with*, their
 “ Advice and Consent) make what *ecclesiastical Laws*
 “ *he shall think fitting*, for the Discipline of the
 “ Church; and may alter, correct, disallow, or *con-*
 “ *firm* the Resolutions of the *Convocation* according to
 “ *bis own Likiog* †.”

And, finally, he gives a List of a great Number of
Alterations, Reviews, and Reformations in ecclesiastical
 Matters, which have been done entirely by *SELECT
 COMMITTEES*, without any Advice or Consent of a

* *Wake's Authority of Chriſ, Pr. &c.* Page 130. † *Ibid.* Page 136.

Convocation (through all the several Reigns of *Hen.* VIII. *Edw.* VI. *Q. Eliz.* *James I.* and *Charles I.*) When the King having first appointed a certain Number of *Bishops* and *Clergymen* (whether they shall be *Clergy* or *Laity*, or what Number of each, is entirely in his Choice) to consider what may be fit to be ordered, then enjoins it by his *Royal Authority*. And adds (directly contrary to what you assert) That AFTER THIS MANNER, viz. by *select Committees*, (and *Acts of Council*) the Reformation of the Church of *England* was in great Measure carried on, and its most important Affairs transacted *. And in his *Appendix*, No. VII. he presents you with a long Catalogue of *Canons*; *Injunctions*; new *Translations* of the *Bible*; *Articles of Religion* set forth; *Explications* made of them; *Examinations* of Ceremonies; *Homilies* composed; *Prayers* sent to the *Archbishop*, with Orders for their public Use; *Visitations* of the whole Kingdom, with an entire Suspension of *Episcopal Jurisdiction*; (The *Visitors* were two Gentlemen, a Civilian, a Register, and only one *Divine*. *Echard's Hist. Eng.* Page 300.) new *Offices of Communion*; other *Offices* reform'd; new *Catechism* drawn up, &c. &c.----All done by private *Commissions*, or otherwise, out of *CONVOCATION* †. So that the *Clergy* in *Convocation* have not the least Ground to claim as a **RIGHT** to be consulted in any future Reformations or Reviews. If the Government shall indulge them with *Leave to assemble*, and to give their Sentiments on

* *Wake's Auth. of Chr. Pr. &c.* Page 256. The King, says *Fuller*, would not intrust the *Convocation* with a Power to meddle with Matters of *Religion*, from a just Jealousy he had of the ill Affection of the major Part thereof; who, under the fair Rind of Protestant Profession, had the rotten Core of Romish Superstition. It was therefore conceived safer for the King to rely on the Ability and Fidelity of some *Select Confidants*, cordial to the Cause of *Religion*, than to adventure the same to be discuss'd and decided by a suspicious *Convocation*. *Church-History, Book VII.* Page 421.

† Whether? And in what Method, our present Governors may think proper to attempt any further *Reviews*, I presume not to guess: But, perhaps may be allow'd to say, That whoever knows the real History of *English CONVENTIONS*; and observes the narrow and bigotted Spirit; the petulant, censorious, uncatholic and rigid Temper, which has ever generally prevail'd there; especially, in its inferior Members; will indulge but faint Hopes of *Reformations* from that Quarter.

these Things, it is to be gratefully received, as a Mitter of Grace, not of Right ; and to be used with due Humility and Deference to the ROYAL Judgment ; in which the SUPREME ecclesiastical Wisdom is by our Constitution declared, and by all our Clergy acknowledg'd to reside.

By this Time, no question, Sir, you have an humbler and juster Sense of the Power of a Convocation ; and perceive it to be no Part of our Government, and that it has no Legislative Power or Authority in these Realms.

Your favourite fantastic Scheme, then, " of *Pastors* " and *Governors having the SOLE POWER as to Church Matters* ; and that the Civil Magistrate has *NONE AT ALL **" is really, you now see, of very dangerous and important Consequence ; actually subversive of our present happy *Constitution* ; wrests from the King and Parliament an high Branch of their *Prerogative* ; impeaches their *supreme Authority* ; attempts to set up another Legislative Power ; and is a deep *Indignity* cast upon our *Reformation* from *Popery*, which was effected ONLY by the *Civil Magistrate*, your boasted *Pastors* and *Governors* struggling vehemently against it. Are these the Returns you make for the Indulgence of that Government, by whose Favour you live at Ease upon the Labour and Sweat of others ! ——

The Times of Hen. VIII. Edw. VI. and Qu. Eliz. you say, were extraordinary Times, and the *Regal Supremacy* was then raised to an *undue Height*. But, see how the Case stood, when the Church was in the Zenith of its Prosperity and Power ! I mean at the Passing the *Act of Uniformity* of Charles II. In the Preamble of which you have the Sentiments of the Legislature, and of that your *most religious King*, which recites to this Effect —— " That the Book of Common Prayer, &c. having been injoin'd to be used by the Statute 1st Elizab. and since that by the Neglect of Ministers, great Inconveniences and Schisms hav-

* *a Defence*, Page 18, 19.

“ ing happen'd ; for Prevention thereof, and for Set-
 “ tling the Peace of the Church, &c. the King had
 “ granted his Commission to some Bishops and other
 “ Divines to review the *Common Prayer Book*, and to
 “ prepare such Alteration and Advice as they thought
 “ fit to offer. And that afterward his Majesty having
 “ called a Convocation, and having been pleased to
 “ authorize and require them to review the same Book,
 “ and make such Alterations as to them should seem
 “ meet, and to exhibit and present the same to his
 “ Majesty, for his further *Allowance* or *Confirmation* ;
 “ and the same having been done ; his Majesty hath
 “ duly consider'd, and fully *approved* and *allowed* the
 “ same ; and recommended to this present Parliament
 “ that the same shall be *appointed* to be used in all
 “ Churches,—Whereupon it is enacted, &c.”

See here, how poor a Figure the *Power* of your *Convocation* makes when shining in its highest Glory ! The Clergy are *authorized* and *required* by the King to propose Alterations in Church Ceremonies and Forms, for *HIS CONSIDERATION* and *ALLOWANCE*, as *Supreme Head* of the Church. The King *approves* and *allows* such of them as he thinks fit ; but in order to their having Power at all to oblige the Members of the Church, the King recommends them to his Parliament ; who turn them into a *Law*. And thus only they acquire all their *obliging Force*. What, now, did the Clergy in all this Affair ! but give their Advice. Which might have been taken, or refused : So Lawyers, incapable of voting in Parliament, are often *consulted* in Forming and Making Laws ; shall they therefore set up for a Share in the *Legislative Power* ; and exalt themselves from *Subjects* to be *Rulers* in the State ?

And when a most happy *Alteration* was, afterward, made in this Law, by the *A&T of Toleration* ; which so deeply affected the Forms and Ceremonies of the Church, with regard to a great Number of the Subjects of this Kingdom, Pray, tell me ! What Hand had the *Convocation* and *Clergy* in that important *Church-Affair* ?

And

And as Forms of *Worship*; so Matters of *Faith* are enacted into Laws, judg'd and punish'd, entirely by the *Civil Magistrate*, without any Intervention or Assistance of the *Clergy*. By the Statute of 9th and 10th of *William III.* it is enacted,—That if any Person shall be convicted in the Courts of *Westminster*, or at the *Affizes*, of denying any one of the Persons of the *Trinity* to be GOD: Or, of maintaining that there are more GODS than one: Or, of denying the *Christian Religion*, or the Authority of the *Scriptures*; he shall forfeit—be imprison'd, &c.—Here, again, you see the Jurisdiction and Decision of the great *Articles of Faith* declared by Parliament to be in the *Lawyers*.

And as to the Punishment of *Vice* and *Irreligion*, the Statutes against Drunkenness, Cursing, Swearing, the Breach of the Sabbath, &c. sufficiently shew that the Parliament and Common-Law Courts have taken to themselves the Cognizance of these. And what now becomes of your *Ecclesiastical Dominion* and *Canonical Settlement* for above 200 Years? When it has been, and might in innumerable other Instances be shewn, that the King and Parliament have all along claimed and exerted a *Supreme Right* in Matters of Religion, Faith, Worship, and Practice. Your *Ecclesiastical Courts*, indeed, are sometimes permitted to take Cognizance of some of these Matters; but then it is to be remember'd. 1. That these are the *King's Courts*; to be held only in his Name. 2. The *Judges* in these Courts often are, always may, and (say many of your most learned Clergy) ought ever to be *Laymen*. And, 3. The King, whenever he pleases, stays their Proceedings; grants *Prohibitions*; takes Causes out of them, and removes them into his Courts of Common Law.—What, now, is become of the *original, radical JURISDICTION*, which you claim for your *Pastors* and *Governors*!

But to return to the *Convocation*,—Our excellent *Constitution*, you see, hath with great Sagacity circumscribed its Power, and reduced it to a mere Shadow, or

just nothing at all. Ecclesiastical *Synods*, from the famous *Council of Nice*, down to the not-famous *Convocation of L——n*, *An. 1717.* sad Experience hath shewn to have been little else than the Pests and Troubles of Mankind ; Mints where pernicious *Errors* have received the Stamp of Authority, and been sent out to corrupt the Church, and to set the World in Flames ; and that, for the most Part, they have been *Conventions* of interested, ambitious, factious and angry Men ; who under a fair Pretence of *Zeal for the Lord of Hosts*, have been driving furiously and foully on in Pursuit of worldly Views ; and with an Affectation of being thought *contending earnestly for the Faith*, have been only contending, like the Disciples, who should be greatest among themselves. This the Wisdom of our *Legislature* knew to have been the *Manner*, the *Practice* immemorial, of ecclesiastical *Synods* ; and therefore guarded, with great Discretion, against the portentous Evil ; denied them all *Legislative Power* ; subjected them entirely to the Authority of the *Civil Magistrate* ; and thus hardly restrained them from throwing, as they have often done, the World into Confusion ; and filling the Church with everlasting Debates.

And now, Sir, having thus laboured your Edification, in a Point of high Importance, where, 'tis certain, you greatly needed it ; by this Time you begin to see, not the *Futility* only, but the *Presumption*, and the real *Danger* of your Scheme. That it is a Suggestion as groundless, as it is ungrateful and ill-timed, that our Reformation was not effected in a *legal* and *right* *Manner*. You see, that, by representing the *Magistrate* as having no Power in *Church-Matters*, you undermine that *glorious Structure* ; betray it into *Popish Hands* ; and subvert the very Foundation of your own admired Church : And that by laying so *essential* a Stress, as you do, upon the *Convocation's Assent* to the *Act of Uniformity*, by which the *Reformation* and the *present Church* was establish'd, you suggest to a crafty *Jesuit* unanswerable Matter to insult and expose both. For,

For, pray, the *Jesuit* will ask, How was that *Affent* of the Convocation obtain'd? Was it not by the Magistrates *Depriving* the holy Bishops; and *Thrusting out* the Church's *Pastors* from those Seats, and from that Authority which GOD had given them therein? And can the *Affent* of a Convocation thus pack'd by the Magistrate, make that *legal*, *canonical*, and *ecclesiastically right*, which was before *illegal*, *uncanonical*, and *ecclesiastically wrong*?

Besides, to talk of the *Convocation's Assent* and *Concurrence*, is Language altogether *unconstitutional*, and has a great deal too *assuming* and *presumptuous* an Air. *Submission*, Sir, and *Obedience* is all the Convocation was *capable* of giving. The King may give his *Affent*, and either House of *Parliament* may give their *Affent*, and thereby confirm and give Authority to any *Act*: But should the Magistrates of a Country Town talk of *FURTHER Confirming* it by *THEIR Concurrence* and *Affent*; which would they most provoke, your Indignation, or your Mirth? And yet, the *Corporation* of a *Cornish Burrough*, Sir, has, as much *Right*, by our Constitution, to talk of *Ratifying* by their *Affent* any *Law* of the Crown, as the *Convocation* itself*.

And hence, by the Way, you see the extreme *Vanity* of your *Imagination* — “ That the Civil *Magistrate*, by *ratifying* the *XXth Article*, hath recognized and owned the *Power* to be not in *bimself*, but “ in *the Church* † ” --- i. e. as you are pleased to understand it, in *the Clergy*. By what Logick, Sir, do you make *the Church*, in that Article, to mean *the Clergy*? Are not the *LAITY* also an *essential Part* of the *Church*? Does not the very preceding Article, *XIXth*, expressly

* The *Convocation* never gave their *Affent* at all to the *Articles of Religion* in K. Edward's Reformation. And all the *Affent* they ever gave to Q. Elizabeth's (as far as I can find) was the setting forth the *Articles*, which was not done till January 1563: Whereas the Reformation was establish'd by the First of Eliz. January 1558. Vid. *Fuller Ch. Hist. B. IX.* Page 52 and 72.

† *1 Defence*, Page 17, Appendix, Page 5.

declare

declare they are? Defining the Church—*to be a Congregation of faithful Men*---But, would you impute to the *Magistrate* so tame, so absurd, so ridiculous a Part, as publickly to *disown* himself to have *any Power* in Church Matters: Yea to *deny* himself to belong to the *Congregation of the Faithful!* Yes, with Astonishment be it seen, this is what you are not ashamed openly to impute to him. “ For the King and Parliament, you “ say, have plainly *disowned* any such Power, as we “ are speaking of, in *themselves*; and recognized it to “ be in the *Church*; and no Body imagines that by the “ *Church* they mean *themselves*. ” — But if by declaring it to be in the *Church*, they have *disowned* it to be in *themselves*; they have, thereby, also *disowned* themselves to be of the *Congregation of the Faithful*; for this *Congregation* they declare to be the *Church*, to whom this *Power* belongs. Besides; this is supposing the KING to *disown* and *give up* a Power which the whole Legislature hath solemnly vested in him; and which every *Bishop* and *Ecclesiastick* in the Kingdom (till the Time of K. William) did swear, that he believed in his Conscience to be true, under the Penalty of a *Premunire*, viz. “ That the King is the only supreme GOVERNOR of this Realm; as well in all spiritual or ecclesiastical Things or Causes, as temporal; and that they will assist and defend him in such Jurisdiction and Authority.”

See, now, the hopeful State to which you have brought the *Civil Magistrate*! You have made him to divest himself of *all Power* as to Church Matters, and to recognize it to be in *you*, the *Clergy*. He is now, therefore, in all these Affairs, to be subject to *you* his HIGHER POWERS. You have Authority from GOD to make *Laws*, and to prescribe *Rites*, which Kings and Parliaments are to obey: *To bind your Kings in Chains*, spiritual, ecclesiastic *Chains*—Rise up, O ye Kings, to these your *Pasters* and *Governors*! be in-

* *1 Defence, Page 17.*

structed,

structed, and pay Homage to their *spiritual Decrees*? This Doctrine was the happy Engine, which hath often lifted *bumble Bishops*, to the *high Places* of the Earth ; hath made *Kings* bow down before them, and subjected *Emperors* to their Feet.

Ecclesiastical Affairs, Sir, you are too sagacious not to know, take in a mighty Compass; and very naturally comprehend the *Principles*, the *Manners*, the whole *social and moral Conduct*, of those over whom these holy Pastors are to *watch*. Thus the *Priests of the Church* have exalted themselves, for many Ages, to be *Princes of the World*; and by Claims of *spiritual Power*, have hook'd in enormous Shares of *temporal Grandeur and Wealth*. But, is this a *proper Time*, think you, to revive and to press Pretensions of this Kind? Thank Heaven, that Darkness is pass'd! The Light of Christian *Liberty* dawns gloriously upon us; and exposes all such *fanatic Claims* to just Scorn and Reproach.

But—I press you no farther—You begin to relent. Having urg'd you with the Weight of your *XXXIV Article*, which you have frequently subscribed; and of your *XXX Canon* to which you have solemnly sworn; both which declare positively, *your Church Ceremonies to be ordain'd by the Authority of the CIVIL MAGISTRATE*; you are, at length, constrain'd to own their Force. But, without the Honour of Retracting your former dangerous Assertion, “*That the Magistrate has no such Power at all**.” You are now brought to acknowledge—“*That the Truth of the Case is, all our Ceremonies, and Forms of Worship, are ordain'd, as they ought to be, both by ecclesiastical and CIVIL Authority †.*” Honestly said at last! Well, if by *Civil Authority*, then the Magistrate has *some Power* in Ordering *Church Matters*; which you have all along denied him; and then the Power is not vested *solely* in the Pastors and

* *1 Defence*, Page 18, 19. † *Appendix*, Page 13.

Governors, as with great Pertinacity you have insisted it was. *Render then to Cæsar, the Things which are Cæsar's;* and lift not up the Heel against the Hand by whose Bounty you are so liberally fed.

You are now willing, I find, to compromise the Matter, and to go Shares with the *Magistrate*, in the Enjoyment of this Power; and presume to talk of an **ALLIANCE**, and of **TERMS** on which it stands, betwixt the State and the Church. This **ALLIANCE**, Sir, is a mere *Phantom*, conjured up by the Strength of a late warm Imagination, to preserve at least a *Shadow* of its lost Power to the Church *. Neither our *History*, nor our *Laws* know any Thing at all of it. The Nature of our *Constitution* utterly disowns it; . and avows the Church to be *not an ALLY*, but a *SUBJECT* to the State. An **ALLIANCE** supposes *Independency* in the Powers betwixt whom it stands. But, by the famous *Act of Submission*, the Church hath resign'd all Pretensions to *Independency*; and given up its Powers into the Hands of the State. The Truth of the Case is this. A few Centuries past, the Church was found guilty of a dangerous *Rebellion* and *Higb-Treason* against the State: Whilst it lay thus at Mercy, as a Criminal before its Judge, its Pardon and Life were given it, *upon the TERMS* of its Resigning all Claims of *Independency*, and Submitting itself thenceforward to the Will of the Prince. But behold! these *Terms of Submission*, you have now, it seems, refined into *Terms of Alliance*; and the Church from a *pardon'd Criminal*, now claims to be a *rival Power*; and to have its Rights and Jurisdiction *independent* of the State. "Our Ceremonies and Forms of Worship are ordain'd by ECCLESIASTICAL, as well as CIVIL Authority." But these, alas! are but Illusions which mock your heated Fancy; for ecclesiastical Authority, as distinguish'd from *civil*, you may rest assured, there is none. Ask your learned *Bishops*, and they will utterly disclaim it. Ask your

* See a late excellent Comment on WARBURTON'S *Alliance*, &c.

able *Lawyers*; and they will tell you, that you incur the Danger of a *Premunire* by presuming to exert any one single *Act* of Authority of this Kind. Ask all the knowing Members of the *Convocation* itself, and they will answer, with one Voice, '*Tis not in us ————— AUTHORITY we have none.* Yea; Ask the meanest *Novice* in the History of the *Reformation*, and of the *Establishment* of your Church; and he will presently acquaint you, that your *Ceremonies and Forms* were **NOT ordain'd by BOTH ecclesiastical and civil Authority**; but by *civil Authority ONLY*: The *Ecclesiasticks* in *Convocation*, and in the *two Universities*, obstinately refusing to give their *Concurrence*; and even entering their very solemn and zealous *Protest* against it.

But, you are still harping that the *Convocation* at last *gave their Assent*. Pray! how did they give it? Not till they had been first *garbled* and *pack'd* by the *Magistrate*: All the *Bishops*, save one, exiled, imprison'd, turn'd out, by his Authority; and *new*, according to his *Taste*, put into their Room; besides, the invincible *Artillery* of *Deaneries*, *Prebends*, snug and fat *Livings* play'd strongly upon the inferior *Clergy*: Many *Dignitaries* amongst these, also, being deprived by the *civil Power*. And, is it strange that the *Convocation*, thus powerfully attack'd, made no long *Resistance*; but yielded, however *reluctant*, to what the *Parliament* had done*? But their *Concurrence*, I must again tell you, whether *free or forced*, gave, and could give, **no AUTHORITY to the new Establishment**; because, by our *Constitution*, they had not the least *Grain of Authority* to give. Suppose the *Convocation* had refused their *Concurrence* to that *Act* of the *Legislature*; would

* Hear what even *Eckard*, who was never suspected of *Partiality* against the *Church*, says----“Fourteen *Bishops*, twelve *Deans*, twelve *Archdeacons*, fifteen *Heads of Colleges*, fifty *Prebendaries*, and eighty *Rectors*, were de-“ prived by the *QUEEN*. But it was strongly believed, that, of the rest, “the greatest Part complied *against their Conscience*; and would have been “ready for another Turn, if the *Queen* had died while that Race of *Incumbents* “lived, and the next Successor had been of *another Religion*.” *Eckard's Hist. Eng.* Page 330.

the Law not have had its Force ? You dare not affirm it. Suppose, again, the Clergy had establish'd any new *Forms*, without an *Act of Parliament*; would the People have been obliged to yield Obedience to them ? neither durst you assert this.

However, not to discourage good Beginnings, I will take you where you are—We are come, then, to this Issue. That the *civil Magistrate* has Power to ordain *Ceremonies and Rites of Worship*, and to make *new Terms* of Christian Communion; and that the Things of this Kind which are done in the Church of *England*, are done, at least in Part, by *CIVIL Authority*. This is what you now grant. But the *Question* then returns, with unanswerable Weight upon you—Who gave him *this Power*? *WHAT Charter* hath lodg'd it in him? Not, surely, the *Scriptures*; the only Charter of the *Christian Church*. For all the *Power or Authority* which the *Scriptures* give the *Magistrate* relates only, and can relate but, to Things of a *civil Nature*; and *cannot at all relate to Things of Worship and Religion*. This never can be contested, because the *Magistrate* was, at the Time, when the *Scriptures* were wrote, and for near three hundred Years after, *Infidel and Pagan*. St. Paul, therefore, by commanding us *to be subject to the bigger Powers*; and to *obey Magistrates, for Conscience Sake, because they are the Ministers of GOD, for Good*—does not, in the least, require our Obedience to their Decrees as to *Ceremonies and Forms of Worship*; or, our *Conformity* to their Establishments, in Things of a *religious Nature*. No, St. Paul himself, and all the *Apostles* were very zealous *Nonconformists*. The grand Scope of all their Labours, their Preaching, their Lives was to persuade and draw Men off from the *establish'd Forms of Worship*; and to convince them that, in these Affairs, there was **ONE King only, and ONE Lord** to whom their Homage *alone* was due: Even JESUS, who by his Sufferings had merited this high Honour, and to whom *alone* GOD has commanded that, in Things of Religion, *every Knee shall bow.*

Here,

Here, then, I again call upon and provoke you to tell me—Who gave the *civil Magistrate* this Authority in *religious Matters*?— You are silent, and cannot say—Well, then, if by the Command of Almighty GOD, and by the original Constitution of the *Christian Church*, he hath none; then, the Subjects of JESUS CHRIST are under no Obligation to obey his Injunctions, in Things of a *religious Nature*; consequently, are in no Fault in *Dissenting* from establish'd Forms; and consequently, your Censures of them, as *great SINNERS* for so doing, are extremely rash and uncharitable; for which it becomes you, to be humbled greatly before GOD, and to ask Pardon of *Men*.

See, now, the unhappy *Pinch* to which you are reduced—if you say the *Magistrate* has Authority to decree *Ceremonies*, and *Forms of Worship*, to make new *Forms of Communion*, and to determine *Controversies of Faith*—you then sin against the undoubted *Rights and Constitution* of the *CHRISTIAN Church*; against GOD, against JESUS CHRIST, against *Reason* and *Common Sense*. But if you say that he has not, you then sin against the *Church of England*, against its *Laws and Constitution*: You are a *Dissenter*, at least, in Principle; but, perhaps, have not *Fortitude* enough to sacrifice, what you call, your *Snugness*, by professing openly your *Dissent*.

Having thus considered the former Part of your *Self-Repugnant Scheme*. 1. That the *Magistrate has not*: And, 2. That he *has* the *Authority* which he claims and exercises in your *Church*: I should now proceed to the other, *viz.* *That it is lodged in the Church's Pastors and Governors*. But, here, to the Surprize of every attentive Reader, you content yourself with *Afferting*, without paying him the Compliment of so much as *Attempting to prove* them, possess'd of this Power. The *BIBLE*, I thought you knew, to be the *Religion of Protestants*; and the *SCRIPTURES*, the *only Rule* of their Practice and Faith. But behold! A *Protestant*, a *Divine*, claiming an high *Power* for his *Pastors and*

Governors ; a *Power* in which the Peace and Purity of the Christian Church is *essentially* concern'd ; and yet not able, nor when called upon *pretending*, to produce one single *Text of Scripture* in Support of this Claim.

I have pointed you to several express *Commands* of the *Sacred Law*, which directly *forbid* and *condemn* this pretended *Power* ; have shewn you, that *Christians* are the *LORD's Freed-Men*, that they are each for Himself, *to study, and teach the Scriptures* — *To examine and try the Spirits* — *To call no Man upon Earth MASTER*, and are not *to be called RABBI*, i. e. are neither to *acknowledge*, nor to *claim* any Authority over others in Things of Religion, *because ONE only is our Lawgiver and Master, in these Things, even CHRIST* ; and all Christians are *Brethren*. That tho' the Princes of the Gentiles *exercise DOMINION over them*; and they who are great, *exercise AUTHORITY upon them*, it SHALL NOT BE SO AMONGST YOU — What have you replied, Sir, to these plain and direct Commands : Have you so much as attempted to evade their Force ? No : but with conscious *Impotence* stand still ; and see this *Scripture-Artillery* demolishing the boasted *Thrones* of your Pastors and Governors, and beating down the *high Places* to which your Imagination had raised them, without so much as extending a feeble Hand for their Support.

From what has been said, on the Point of *Church Power*, you see with how little Reason you plume yourself and Gentlemen of the Establishment, as the *only* proper Champions to encounter the *Church of Rome* — “ Upon the Head of *Heresy, Schism, Ordination, Tradition, Church-Unity, and Catholic-Communion*, “ no Protestant is so well qualified to write upon these, “ and so likely to do it to the Conviction of a Papist, “ as one of the *Church of England* ; but, to be sure, “ not a *Protestant Dissenter*.” What Protestant Dissenters can do on the *Popish Controversy*, the *Salter's Hall Lectures* will shew to their lasting Honour. And, in

in Truth, all your mighty Champions, *Chillingworth, Hales, Stillingfleet, Middleton, &c.* in all their Conflicts with the Church of *Rome* have been ever forced to quit *their own*, and to borrow *our Weapons*; and to *these* alone have owed the Triumphs they have gain'd.

Councils, Fathers, the Church's Power to decree Rites and Authority in Controversies of Faith—are Armour in which no *Protestant* dares look a sagacious and learned *Jesuit* in the Face. No; but the *Sufficiency of Scripture*, and the *Right of private Judgment* (our distinguishing and proper Principles) are the *only Method* of Assault before which the *Romish System* immediately falls. These, Sir, if you know any Thing of the State of that *Controversy*, you must know to have been *the Principles* upon which your own learned Doctors have defended the Reformation; and *the Principles* on which alone it is *capable of Defence*. But then you are to remember also, that they are *Principles* on which the Church of *England* can never possibly be defended; and which, if faithfully and duly follow'd, would have brought *Chillingworth, and Hales, and Middleton* amongst us; and would make every *intelligent* and *honest Protestant*, in this Kingdom, a *Diffenter* from the establish'd Church.

For if *the Scripture* be, indeed, a *sufficient and perfect Rule*; what becomes of your *additional Splendours* (as you are pleased to call them) and your *Improvements* upon Christianity! What, of your Church's *Power to decree Ceremonies and Rites*! What, of *Sponsors* and the *Cross* in Baptism, Kneeling at the Lord's Supper, Bowing to the East, &c! of which the *SCRIPTURES*, the *sufficient and perfect Rule*, say not a Word. And if the *Right*, and the *Duty of private Judgment* be acknowledg'd, into what a Fume, alas! evaporates the Church's boasted *Authority in Controversies of Faith*! Your learned Doctors themselves felt, and own'd, the Difficulty of the Part they had to act. And 'tis, really, pleasant to observe; how, in their Attacks upon *Dis-senters*,

Enterers, Councils and Fathers, Church-Authority and Church-Power, the Danger and Sin of Schism, &c. are gravely muster'd up, and plied warmly upon us. But no sooner does a crafty Jesuit come forth arm'd, *Cap a Pe*, with Weapons of this Kind, than away they are all flung ! to our Quarters they retreat ! Then, *the BIBLE, the BIBLE only is the Religion of Protestants*, and every Man is to *read*, and to *judge for himself*; then, not those, who *separate* from a Church, that imposes unlawful (unscriptural) Terms, are guilty of *Schism*; but the Church alone is guilty in *imposing* such Terms.

A slight Attention will shew you, with how extremely ill a Grace a Church of England Divine must appear upon the Head of *Schism, Tradition, Church-Unity*—Who by the TRADITIONS of Men (Sponsors, the Cross, &c.) hath notoriously made void the *Commandment of GOD* (to receive one another, but not to doubtful Disputations *.) Who breaks, in a flagrant Manner, the *UNITY* of the *Christian Church*, by setting up NEW Forms of Fellowship and Communion in it ; and by casting out such as *Christ* receives into it : And who declares, before the World, against CATHOLIC-COMMUNION, by refusing to admit any to the two Sacraments of Religion ; except, besides what *Christ* and his Apostles have ordain'd, they submit also to some Rites which *themselves* have ordain'd, as *Improvements* upon the Plan which the inspired Apostles left.—And is this, now, a *Man* to encounter *Rome's* Emissaries ? Must he not go forth with infinite Disadvantage, and feel his own Weapons turn'd violently upon himself ? But, the *Dissenter*, who stands fast to his distinguishing and proper Principles (*Sufficiency of Scripture, and Right of private Judgment*) at once beats them from the strong Holds of *Councils and Fathers* (where *you* have been assaulting, but hardly able to dislodge them) and makes all their learned So-

* Rom. xiv. 1.

pbiſtry fall before the Sacred Force of the BIBLE and COMMON SENSE. And hence it is, as before observed, that the Swarms of unhappy Proselytes, which these Seducers are said to make, are all drawn from *your*, not *one* that I have ever heard of, from *our* Churches: Your Doctrines and Forms too naturally preparing them to take that fatal Step.

But it is Time that we now quit the Subject of *Church-Power*. I have treated it the more largely, because it enters into the *Essence*, and is the one single Point, every Person sees, on which the whole *Controversy* turns. Your other two Points, the *Sacramental Test*, and the *Regal Supremacy*, I shall dismiss in fewer Words.

As to the First, The *Sacramental Test*—I perceive nothing in your *Appendix* which either *merits* or *needs* a particular Reply. Only because you still insist, *that as the Law now stands, the Priest has a Power of Repelling evil Livers, when they come to receive the Sacrament, as a Qualification for a Place*; and by this wrong Apprehension, are kept from viewing the Affair in a Light so distasteful as it really deserves; I shall offer a few Things for your Illumination also here: Presuming, when you see, that *you have not Power*, in that Case, *to refuse the CHRISTIAN COMMUNION to the wickedest Man living*, you will groan under the disgraceful Yoke; and for the Honour of *Christianity*, and the Ease of your own Consciences, you will be the first to wish its Repeal. Now this is a *Point of Law*, and has been given against you, by the learned in that Profession. And, if you attentively weigh the Case, their *Opinion* will appear grounded upon Reasons of very great and unanswerable Strength. Because, if the Priest has a *Liberty of DISCRETION* in this Case, it is then in his Power to deprive the King of the Services of his loyal and good Subjects; as also, to deprive the Subjects of some of the most valuable Favours of the Prince; yea, the Priest has then a Power to put a *Negative*, in many Cases, upon the Nominations of his

SOVEREIGN to Posts of the highest Dignity and Importance in the State.

His Majesty appoints a Person to some great Office in his Army, his Household or his Fleet; but the LAW forbids him to *act* (at least, but for a short Time) till he has first taken the *Sacramental Test*: He comes, therefore, according to *Law*, to qualify for his Place. No, Sir, answers the Priest; I say you are a prophanè and wicked Man, a notorious *evil Liver*: I am authorized therefore by the *Rubric*, and commanded by the *Canon*, to refuse you the *Sacrament*; and, be assured, I will not give it——So here is the King's Commission, the Subject's Expectations, and the Officer's good Services, all quash'd at once.

But can it enter into an Imagination so vague as even yours, that our *Laws* have put it in the Priest's Power thus to bar the King's Commission to a *General*, an *Admiral*, a *Secretary of State*. Gentlemen who too much merit, perhaps, the Character of *evil Livers* may, sometimes, by the *Royal Choice* be appointed to high temporal Offices; and may be capable of discharging them with great Advantage to their Country, and great Honour to themselves. But, must the Priest's *Consent* be ask'd! at his *Discretion* must it lie! whether the Person, whom the King hath honour'd with an high Commission, shall presume to proceed in the Execution of his Trust!——Yes, it really thus lies in the Priest's Power (you will have it) to put a *Negative* upon the Crown. Without the Priest's *Approvalation* of him, as being NOT an *evil Liver*, no Officer shall presume, nor can be qualified by Law to *act*.

I congratulate you much, Sir, that you are now even with the *civil Magistrate*. The *Noli Prosequi's* and *Prohibitions* he has granted to stop Proceedings in your ecclesiastical Courts, have been Matter of long Grievance: Now, you have it in your Power to make ample *Reprizals* on him. You have now a Power, by LAW, to judge *after, above*, the King. Tho' his Majesty ever so much wants and desires the Services of a brave

brave Officer, you are first to *sit in Judgment* on him ; to consider whether he is an *evil Liver* ; and according as you pronounce concerning his *moral Character*, he shall, or shall not, be qualified and allowed to act— These, doubtless, are the Days, of which blessed *Laud* is said to prophesy ! Who *hoped to see the Time, when no Jack Gentleman in England shoul'd dare to stand cover'd before the meanest Priest.* The holy *Martyr*, indeed, died unbless'd with the Sight. But, *you*, his Son and Successor in Doctrine and Spirit, are taking bold Strides to reach *Pisgab-Top*, from whence to feast your Eyes with that *promised* happy State.

I might rest the Matter here—and hope you are now convinced of the presumptuous and high Nature of the Power you are thus, publickly, again claiming for the *Priest* : But, to silence for ever all Doubts on this Head, I will present you with an *Authority* of irresistible Weight. This is no other than the lower House of *Convocation*, An. 1704 ; staunch Champions for the Church, you know, as ever honour'd the *British Isle* ; in their Address to the upper House, amongst *Gravamina Cleri* Grievances to be redress'd, they represent—

“ The increasing Difficulties of the parochial *Clergy*,
 “ about administering the holy Sacrament indifferently
 “ to all Persons who demand it, in order to qualify
 “ themselves for Office ; because they see not how
 “ they could, in several Cases, act conformably to the
 “ *Rubrics* and *Canons* of the Church, in Repelling
 “ such Persons as were *unworthy*, and particularly no-
 “ torious *Schismaticks*, without exposing themselves to
 “ vexatious and expensive Suits at Law ”*— This was the *Construction* which this learned Body of *Ciergy*, you see, put upon this *Law* ; but a *Construction*, because I had made it, which you, bleſſ'd with ſuperior Light, take upon you to pronounce—“ forced, unnatural, whimsical, inequitable + ”—Happy 'tis nothing worse !

* *Tindal's Hist. Eng.* Vol. III. Page 686.

+ Append. Page 20.

But, to conclude this Point—If, as the Law now stands, *the Priest has*, as you affirm, *a Power to repel evil Livers*; pray! what is the Reason that the *Rubrics* and *Canons*, which so solemnly oblige him to it, are not only, not *faithfully* observed, but most shamefully violated, and quite trampled under Foot? Why, amongst the Swarms of *notorious* evil Livers, *Hereticks*, *Blasphemers*, and open *Unbelievers*, who continually come to the *LORD's TABLE*, to qualify for a Place; do we never hear of *one* rejected by the Priest? What! is there no Conscience, no Virtue, no Integrity or Honour left amongst those who administer this holy Rite of Religion! seeing the *Rubric* requires, and the *Canons* obliges to *reject* these evil Livers; and the *Scandal* of receiving them (both to *Deists* without, and to *Christians* within) is so crying and flagrant; Why, in the *Name of GOD*, whose *Ministers* and *Stewards* you profess yourselves to be, are these *Enemies* to his Government, these *Aliens* from his Family, these *Despisers* of his Son, never rejected, but ever tamely received, as *bis CHILDREN*, to *bis TABLE*—Why! but because the Priest *knows* there is *a Law* which hangs heavily over him, and threatens to punish with severe Penalty its Breach: And this being the Case, he chuses rather to throw himself upon the Mercies of *GOD*, than upon the Indignation of *Man*.

And now, Sir, if with this dreadful and oppressive Yoke upon your Neck; whilst scoffing *Infidels* laugh, and discerning *Christians* mourn; you are easy and well pleased; and bless yourself, and your Church in the Protection of *this Law*: All I shall say, at present, is, that I envy not your Felicity; but heartily thank Heaven I have neither Lot nor Share in this Matter. Only, hear the *Word*, which *GOD* sent by his *Prophet* of old to certain Time-serving *Priests*. *Ezek.* *XLIV. 6, 7.* *Thou shalt say to the rebellious House*; let it suffice you of all your *Abominations*; in that ye have brought into my *Sanctuary* *Strangers*, uncircumcised in Heart, to be in my *Sanctuary*, to pollute it; even *MY HOUSE*,

*HOUSE, when ye offer my Bread——they have broken
my Covenant, because of all your Abominations.*

I have said too much on your *first Topic*, of *Church-Power*, to have either Room or Occasion to add many Things on your *last*, our *Constitution in Church and State*: Here, indeed, I observe with Pleasure, that amidst the Shew you affect to make of confuting my Account of the *regal Supremacy*, and of our *Constitution*, you hardly, in one single Instance, presume to contradict it. My Account, Sir, was founded upon *Fact* and upon *Law*. After close Examination, I suppose you found it to be so; and therefore tho' to save Appearances, you would seem to say something on this Subject also; yet in your whole 14 Pages, there is scarce the Shew of any Opposition to what I had advanced.

As for the *Form of speaking* in Use amongst us——
Our Constitution in Church and State——That it is really an *Impropriety*, as generally understood, I do not at all hesitate (with due Submission to the great Authorities by whom it is used) again to insist. It is a *Form of speaking*, no doubt, drawn from the Usage of *Popish Times*; before the *Reformation* of our Religion took Place. For *then* there, truly, was a *Constitution in Church*, distinct from, and independent of, our *Constitution in State*. The Church had, then, its Laws, its Rights, its Officers and Powers, and its sovereign or supreme Head, *peculiar to itself*, and *apart* from the State. But, *now*, by the *Reformation* all that *Independency* and *Distinction* is abolish'd; it is now become entirely and absolutely a *civil System*: There are *now* no *Laws* in the Church (I mean none of *human Enaction*) but what were made by the *civil Magistrate*, and receive all their Obligation and Authority from him: There are now no *Officers* in the Church but what are constituted by the Authority and Direction of the *Magistrate*, and are all liable to be unmade and deprived again by him——But that our *Constitution in Church*, is nothing really, but a *civil or parliamentary Constitution*;

tution ; has, with incontestible Evidence, been shewn in the preceding Letters ; and is a Truth, indeed, so plain, that no intelligent or sober Member of your Church will, I apprehend, so much as *attempt* to deny.

Our *Constitution*, therefore, being now chang'd by the happy *Reformation* ; so, doubtless, would this *Form of Speaking* too ; but seems to have been retain'd for Reasons of Policy, to sooth the *Weakness* of those who were then the *weakest* of all the People, and the most averse to the *Reformation*, I mean the *Clergy**. With the same condescending Views, probably, it is still kept in Use ; but in real Strictness and Propriety to talk of our *Constitution in Church and State*, is not only to put the *Body* before the *Head*, the *Effect* before the *Cause*, the *Handmaid* before the *Mistress* ; but it is to convey an Idea your Authorities could not possibly intend to convey, because not founded in *Truth*, viz. That the *Church* has a *Constitution* distinct from, independent of, yea prior or superior to our *Constitution in State*.—By the Way, you will remember also, that the *Presbyterian* Church of *Scotland* is as *essential*, *fundamental*, and *unalterable* a Part of our present *CONSTITUTION*, as the *episcopal* Church of *England* can ever pretend to be.

My Account of the *POWER* which our Laws and *Constitution* give to the *Kings* and *QUEENS* of this *Realm*, in Affairs *ecclesiastical* ; to instruct, over-rule, direct, controul, all the *Archbishops*, *Bishops*, and *Priests* of this *Kingdom*, in all their *sacerdotal* and most *spiritual* *Concerns*, &c. you do not pretend to *litigate*, but rather attempt to *vindicate* and *explain*. But you unhappily forget the one grand and material *Point*, for which it was introduced ; and to which, above all other, it concern'd you to speak ; and that is, to *reconcile* this

* So because 'tis said----*The Lords Spiritual and Temporal*----Will any one therefore plead, that a *Bishop* is of higher Rank than a *Duke*? 'Tis no more than giving a *Lady* the upper Place ; or, according to the apostolic Precept, *Honouring the weaker Vessel*. What Defect of Argument does it shew, to lay such Stress upon a mere *Compliment*!

Constitution of the Church of *England*, with the Constitution of the Church of *Christ*: And to shew, that *Dissenters* cannot separate from the *one*, without the *Danger*. and the *bigg Crime* of *Renting* themselves from the *other*. This was what you asserted, and flourished copiously upon; but are now, I presume, too well instructed to endeavour to support. You now see them, Sir, to be two *distinct* and quite *different Societies*: And will be henceforward eased of thole *painful Considerations* over the Souls of your *dissenting Brethren*, with which your generous Mind labour'd; and be terrified no more with direful Apprehensions on Account of our *Scism*, which seem all your Life long to have *held you in Bondage*.

There is a little *unhappy Slip* which, tho' not quite in Place, I shall take Notice of here—In *Page 13.* of your *Appendix*, you charge me “with *false Play* in “ Citing your *XXXIV Article*, as *declaring expressly* “ *that your Church Ceremonies were ordain'd by the civil Magistrate*. And ask me—Did you find there “ *any such Words?*” And yet, with agreeable Surprise, I find you either so uncautious, or so honest, as within a few Lines, to cite the very Words of the *Article*, which support, in the strongest Manner, the Sense I had given, where *an open and wilful Violation of these Ceremonies is*, by the Article declared, *to be an Hurting the Authority of the CIVIL MAGISTRATE*. Can a Violation of these Ceremonies violate the *Magistrate's Authority*, if by *bis Authority* they had not been *ordain'd*?

But these are small Matters, in Comparison with what follows. The Affair of Mr. *Whiston* I thought you would gladly have let sleep. The Case, to be sure, rung much: You have been once and again flinging to rid yourself of it; but the Manner in which you now do it, rather sorely wounds, than gives you Relief. “ You tax me with *Misrepresentation*, and with no “ mean Talent that Way *.” Yea, have the Cou-

* Appendix, Page 39.

rage to confront me, with a Citation from Bp. *Burnet* to whom I had refer'd, as supporting my Account. But what will the World say, Sir! How will all your Friends, if not your *Heart*, reproach you! and the Learned, amongst whom you rank, hold you in great Derision! When they see you undertaking to give the Public an Account of his Lordship's *History* of that Case; but, either carelessly overlooking, or wilfully suppressing, the material and important Passages, which clearly and irrefragably support my Account.

" His Lordship, say you, * reports it thus—
 " That it seeming doubtful, whether the Convocation
 " could, in the first Instance, proceed against a Man
 " for Heresy; and it being certain that their Proceed-
 " ings, if not warranted by Law, might involve them
 " in a *Premunire*, the upper House, in an Address,
 " *prayed the Queen to ask the Opinion of the Judges, and*
 " *such Others as she thought fit*, concerning these Doubts,
 " that they might know how the Law stood in this
 " Matter." Here you stop short with the *Bishop's* Narration: having either not *Patience* to read, or not *Honesty* to write further; and then, with Flourish, ask—“ Will these Accounts now authorize you to
 “ represent, as you do, *the two Houses of Convocation*,
 “ as waiting upon her Majesty; and that too to be
 “ instructed by *her*, and to learn *her Judgment*; and
 “ not that neither, how the Law stood in Relation to
 “ their Proceedings, but how the Gospel stood in Re-
 “ lation to the Opinions of Mr. *Whiston*, and the Mys-
 “ tery of the Trinity? And do you not now perceive
 “ your Misrepresentation of the Case, and that I did
 “ not *talk without Book*, when I spake of it as a *Speci-*
 “ *men* of your Talent, which, indeed, is not mean
 “ that Way.”

There is one Thing I here perceive, Sir; which is, that if you do not *talk without Book*, yet when *the Book is before you*, you either want *Capacity* or *Integrity*.

* Appendix, Page 38.

to make a proper Use of it. For besides the *partial* and *maim'd* Account which you have given of this Matter, his Lordship expressly adds the *important Passages* which follow; whence the *Public* will please to observe, with how little *Fairness* and *Truth* you treat this famous Case; and how great is both the *Church's* and *my own Infelicity*; she in having an *Advocate*, and I an *Opponent*, capable of such dishonourable and low Methods of Defence.

His Lordship says—“ That by the Act of 1st of Elizabeth, which defined what should be judged *Heresy*, that *Judgment* was declared to be in the CROWN—The Bishops in Convocation drew out several Propositions from Mr. Whiston's Books, which seemed plainly to be reviving of *Arianism*, and censured them as such. The lower House (excepting to one Proposition) censured them in the same Manner. This the *Archbishop*, being then disabled by the Gout, sent by one of the Bishops to the QUEEN, for her *Assent*; (Page 1194, *Approbation*) who promised to CONSIDER OF IT. At their (the Convocation's) Meeting next Winter, no Answer being come from the QUEEN, two BISHOPS were sent to ASK it, and to receive her Majesty's Pleasure in it; but she could not tell what was become of the Paper the *Archbishop* had sent her. So an Extract of the *Censure* was again sent to her; but she THOUGHT NOT FIT to send any Answer to it. So Whiston's Affair slept, and all further Proceedings against him were stopp'd, since the QUEEN did not CONFIRM the Step that we had made; tho' he afterward publish'd a large Work in four Volumes Octavo *.”

Here let it be noted. 1. The *Judgment* of what is, or is not, to be treated as *Heresy*, is, by our *apostolic Constitution* lodged wholly in the CROWN. The QUEEN, when such wears it, is the *proper*, the *sole*

* Burnet's Hist. of his Times, Vol. vi. Page 1133, 34, 35, 94. Edit. 12mo.

Judge,

Judge, what Doctrines and Books shall be *censured as HERETICAL*: What Principles and Tenets are, or are not, contrary to the holy *orthodox* Faith:

Note. 2. The two Houses, having extracted several Passages from Mr. Whiston's Books, and *censured* them as *heretical* *; deputed first one, then two Bishops to wait upon the QUEEN, to *ask* her *Approval and Assent*, to receive her Majesty's Pleasure in this Affair, and to desire her *Confirmation*, without which, their *Censure* was of not the least Signification or Validity in the Church.

3. Upon the Receipt of this Request the QUEEN, as *sole Judge*, promised to *CONSIDER* of it. The Affair was of great Importance, viz. "What the primitive apostolic Doctrine was concerning the Trinity, Incarnation, Nature, and Generation of the Logos? Whether there were three Persons existing in one undivided Substance: Or, whether the Logos was distinct in Essence from the Father; not created, nor made, but in an ineffable Manner, begotten from Eternity? And, Finally, Whether the apostolical Constitutions were a genuine and inspired Book; and a true Part of the sacred Canon?" Her Majesty was now applied to, by her two Houses of Convocation, and requested, as *SOLE JUDGE*, to pronounce authoritatively upon these Points, i. e. to tell them whether Mr. Whiston's Doctrine was to be received or rejected; to be considered as *Heresy*, or not, in this Church. The QUEEN, as became a wise Judge, refused to pronounce *rashly*: She took Time to *CONSIDER of it*; to weigh sedately in her Mind the Merits of the Cause, lest she should condemn the Innocent.

* The *Archbishop* and *Bishops* in their Address to the Queen, say, that Mr. Whiston had advanced several *DAMNABLE* and *BLASPHEMOUS* *Affertions* against the *Doctrine* and *Worship* of the ever blessed Trinity: And, in their *Censure*, they earnestly beseech all Christian People, by the Mercies of CHRIST, to take Heed how they give Ear to these false Doctrines, as they tender the Honour and Glory of our Saviour, &c.

Note, *The Scriptures*, and the four first general Councils, are the Measure set by Law, to judge of Heresy: Her Majesty, therefore, being now requested by her Clergy to judge authoritatively in this important Case, acted a worthy Part in deferring her JUDGMENT, till she had examined carefully the Rule by which she was to judge.

Observe. 4. After the QUEEN had taken Time maturely to CONSIDER of these deep and mysterious Points, she THOUGHT NOT FIT to send any Answer. Upon her Majesty's THOUGHTS, the Issue of this great Affair is seen absolutely to depend. Finally,

'Tis worthy to be observed. 5. That her Majesty's THOUGHTS and JUDGMENT, on this weighty Case, were quite DIFFERENT from those of her learned Bishops and Clergy. They thought Mr. Whiston's Writings "contain'd damnable and wicked Doctrines, and earnestly beseech all Christian People, by the Mercies of Christ, to take Heed how they give Ear, &c."—and judg'd them to deserve a public and solemn Censure: Her Majesty THO'T OTHERWISE. She did not THINK FIT to confirm the Step the Convocation had made. In Consequence of which, their Proceedings were all stop'd; and the solemn Censure they had passed with all their earnest Obtestations, by the Mercies of CHRIST, evaporate into Air.—What Improvements are here made, by the Wisdom of later Ages, in the primitive apostolic Plan! Behold the WOMAN now empower'd, not only to teach, but to usurp Authority over the Man; over all the Archbishops, Bishops, and Priests of this Realm; to vacate their most solemn Censures; to quash and stop at once their spiritual Proceedings, in an Affair where blasphemous Doctrines, and damnable and wicked Errors, were bringing Danger of everlasting Ruin to the Souls over whom they watch'd! See here, Sir, the two Scales, that are to try Doctrines and Opinions in your holy apostolic Church: In one is laid the united Judgment, of all the Bishops and Clergy in Convocation convened; in the other, the QUEEN's

F alone;

alone : Lo, the former mounts, and kicks the Beam !
The single Judgment of the QUEEN, in the Balance of
the Church, weighs more than that of all the learned
Bishops and Priests of the Realm !

And is not this, now, exactly consonant to the Account I had given ? “ Is not here, Sir, the very
“ coinely and edifying Sight (at which you except) *
“ of the two Houses of Convocation waiting upon the
“ good Queen, to be instructed by her Majesty, whe-
“ ther that Gentleman’s Books concerning the Tri-
“ nity were to be condemna’d, as heretical, or not ? ”
Do they tell us, “ you ask, of the Synod laying their
“ Censure before the Queen, to have her Judgment
“ upon it ? ” Yes — “ And of their Waiting upon a
“ WOMAN, who could be supposed, to know as little
“ of this Matter as of the Motion of the Stars, to
“ learn from her Mouth, what the Church is to believe,
“ and what to reject, as to this great Mystery of Faith ? ”
Yes, you see, with your own Eyes, that this is really
the Case. Why, Sir, will you constrain me to expati-
ate upon Things which reflect no Honour upon the
Church ; and by a rash and indiscreet Defence buri the
Cause you would support ! How much wiser is the
Part your candid Bretbren are now acting, who, like
dutiful and pious Sons, are taking a Veil, and walking
backward, to cover the Nakedness which has been too
long exposèd to the Jests of scoffing Unbelievers.

As your Letters and Defences breathe a noble Com-
passion to the straying Souls of Dissenters ; the extraor-
dinary Instance, with which you conclude the whole, ought
not to be overlook’d. You are concern’d, it seems, “ that I have read, and in several Instances
“ agree in Sentiment and Reasoning — with the Au-
“ thor of the Rights of the Christian Church ; and ap-
“ pear to have much studied and profited by that wor-
“ thy Author — And are sorry to find dissenting
“ Ministers and Gentlemen dealing so much in Books
“ of this Sort. So long as this is the Case, what Hope

" of a Comprehension ! Or, indeed, who would wish " for it ! * " I have read, Sir, and I hope profited by *the Rights, &c.* As you profess to have read, and I hope not without Profit, *Bellarmin*, an Author incomparably worse. As for my Agreement with THE RIGHTS, &c. as far as that Author agrees with Truth, with Scripture, with Law, you must give me Leave to say (without augmenting, I hope, your Sorrow) that I esteem it not the least Reproach. Nay for once, Sir, if you please I will make you my Confessor, and frankly own, that in many Things I agree in Sentiment and Reasoning with one far worse than either *Bellarmin* or *the Rights, &c.* Who this may be, you will see, *Luke iv. 41. James ii. 19.*

Dissenting Ministers and Gentlemen, I presume, deal in Books of all Sorts, from whence they can gather useful Knowledge, and improve and enlarge their Minds. They have dealt in the Writings of the shrewdest *Deists* (Books much worse than *the Rights, &c.*) as you see by the many noble Defences of Christianity which their Pens have produced. Your—Dealing in Books of this Sort—is a Bugbear, Sir, which may frighten Children in Understanding; but Dissenters, you should have known, have not so learned CHRIST. They are commanded to try the Spirits; to examine, and prove all Things; and remember the noble Bereans, who are commended by St. Paul for searching carefully into the Grounds and Evidence of Things before they gave their Assent. And if this Liberty of Examination, and of speaking and writing freely upon Subjects of Religion, be a Bar to a Comprehension—very long may it remain ! It is the Glory of Christianity that it shuns not the severest Search: 'Tis Bigotry and Error only that love to hide themselves in Darkness, and grow touchy and alarm'd if you seek to bring them into open Sight.

* Appendix, Page 41, 44.

We acknowledge, Sir, your Goodness in bringing down to our Understandings the Mystery of CONSECRATIONS of Churches and Church-Yards; and your kind Attempt to illustrate the Usefulness, Edification, and Comeliness of this Ceremony. There are some previous Questions, which I could wish to see answered, before we enter thoroughly into the grand Debate—As, whether you think the Apostle *Paul*, in all his apostolic Labours and Travels thro' the Churches, ever consecrated a Plat of Ground? Whether any of the twelve Apostles, amongst the Miracles and mighty Works which they every where wrought, ever did this wondrous Thing? Whether the Synagogues, where our SAVIOUR preach'd; the Chamber where he instituted, and first celebrated his sacred Supper; the upper Room where the Apostles met, when they actually received the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost; the House of *Aquila* and *Priscilla*, *Nympha*, &c. in which were Christian Churches; had really any other Consecration than our Places of Worship have? And yet, whether these were not as much the House of God, and Places of his more immediate Presence, as any splendid Cathedral, now consecrated with all the Pomp of sacerdotal Device?

You appeal to “the Forms which Bp. *Andrews* and “others have used in their Consecrations. And ask—“What think you now? Is there any Thing ridiculous or superstitious in all this? *” Yes, extremely much of both, if they at all resemble that of A. B. Laud (the only one I have ever seen) when he consecrated the Churches of St. Catherine Cree, St. Giles's, and others in London. An intolerable Piece of ecclesiastical Foppery, sufficient to have made a popish Cardinal blush, and which no Protestant can read but with indignant Concern! The Form has, in larger Histories, been more than once publish'd; but having never seen it in any little Tract, I shall beg leave to transcribe it, for the Edification of our common Readers. A

* Appendix, Page 45.

striking Instance of the *Danger* of indulging *human Invention* in Things of Religion; and which shews, into what Wilds of ridiculous Superstition even *learned* Minds are apt to run, when they leave the *Simplicity* of the *Gospel of CHRIST*.

" The *Bishop* came attended with several of the high Commission, and some Civilians. At his Approach to the West Door of the Church, which was shut and guarded by Halberdeers, some that were appointed for that Purpose, cried with a loud Voice—*Open, open, ye everlasting Doors, that the King of Glory may come in!* Presently the Doors were open'd, and the *Bishop*, with some Doctors and principal Men, entered. As soon as they were within the Place, his *Lordship* fell down upon his Knees; and, with Eyes lifted up, and his Arms spread abroad, said, *This Place is holy, the Ground is holy; In the Name of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, I pronounce it holy.* Then walking up the middle Isle towards the Chancel, he took up some of the Dust, and threw it into the Air several Times. When he approach'd near the Rail of the Communion Table, he bow'd towards it five or six Times; and returning, went round the Church, with his Attendants, in Procession; saying first the hundredth and then the nineteenth *Psalm*, as prescribed in the *Roman Pontifical*. He then read several Collects, in one of which he *prays GOD to accept of that beautiful Building, and concludes thus—We CONSECRATE this Church, and separate it unto THEE as HOLY GROUND, not to be profaned any more to common Use.* In another he *prays—That ALL who should hereafter be buried within the Circuit of this HOLY and SACRED Place, may rest in their Sepulchres in Peace, till Christ's coming to Judgment, and may then rise to eternal Life and Happiness.*"

" Then the *Bishop*, sitting under a Cloth of State, in the Isle of the Chancel, near the Communion Table, took a written Book in his Hand, and pronounced

" nounced *Curses* upon those who should hereafter profane that *holy Place* by Musters of Soldiers, or keeping prophane Law-Courts, or carrying Burdens through it : And at the End of every Curse, he bowed to the EAST, and said, *Let all the People say Amen.* When the *Curses* were ended, which were about twenty, he pronounced a like Number of *Blessings* upon ALL that had any Hand in Framing and Building that *sacred* and beautiful Church ; and on those that had given, or should hereafter give, any Chalices, Plate, Ornaments, or other Utensils : And, at the End of every *Blessing*, he bow'd to the EAST, and said, *Let all the People say Amen.* After this came the Sermon, then the Sacrament, which the *Bishop* consecrated and administer'd in the following Manner.

" As he approach'd the *Altar*, he made five or six low Bows ; and coming up to the Side of it, where the *Bread* and *Wine* were cover'd, he bowed seven Times. Then, after reading many Prayers, he came near the *Bread* ; and gently lifting up the Corner of the Napkin, beheld it, and immediately letting fall the Napkin, he retreated hastily a Step or two, and made three low Obeisances. His *Lordship* then advanced, and having uncovered the *Bread* bowed three Times as before. Then he laid his Hand on the Cup, which was full of Wine, with a Cover upon it ; which having let go, he step'd back, and bowed three Times towards it ; then he came near again, and lifting up the Cover of the Cup, looked into it, and seeing the *Wine*, let fall the Cover again, retired back, and bowed as before. Then the Elements were consecrated, and the *Bishop* having first received, gave it to some principal Men in their Surplices, Hoods and Tippets ; after which, many Prayers being said, the Solemnity of the Consecration ended."

This, Sir, was the *Sense*, and this the *Manner* of that celebrated Martyr and Governor of your *Churh*, in

in this Business of CONSECRATION. And, what now think you? Was there nothing *ridiculous* or *superstitions* in all this! You seem, indeed, to have not quite so exalted an Opinion of this Solemnity as his Lordship; but as the *Church* has no where (that I know) explain'd herself as to this Matter; nor censured *Laud's* Conduct; nor prescribed any set Form in which this Ceremony is to be done; any *Bishop*, I apprehend, at present, is at full Liberty to use the same, and may now consecrate a Church after the Manner of St. Catherine Cree Church. And pray! to whom shall I attend, as best knowing and expressing the *Church's* Sentie in this Point, to the great Archbishop *Laud*; Or, to— Mr. *White* sometime Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge.

I have now done with your *Appendix*—There is another OFFICE of your *Liturgy*, alike liable to the severe Exceptions of all well-instructed Christians, and to the Sneers of insulting *Deists*, as any I have yet considered; and that is, your OFFICE for the Ordination of Priests and Deacons. This, if you call me forth again, I may more particularly shew. At present, I only ask—Whether to your sober Reason it really appears a fit Question, to be put to EVERY young Gentleman that comes from the University for Orders to the Bishop; whether he trusts that he is INWARDLY MOVED BY THE HOLY GHOST to take upon him this Office? And for EVERY such young Gentleman to declare solemnly as in God's Presence, that he trusts that he is SO INWARDLY MOVED. The Gentlemen and their Communication; the Manners, the Tafte, and State of the Universities; you, perhaps, better know, Sir, than I shall pretend. Tell me then, before God, is their moral State such that you can reasonably think EVERY Student that comes thence, when he gets a Title to a Living and applies for Orders to the Bishop, doth really feel himself inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to make that Application? How is it we are not afraid to trifle in an Affair so exceeding serious and important! Is it not

not coming too near the Sin of *Ananias*, lying to the **HOLY GHOST?**

And when, kneeling before the Bishop, he lays his Hand on the Student's Head, is it not a strange saying —*Receive the HOLY GHOST*—*Whose Sins THOU dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose Sins THOU dost retain they are retained; in the Name of the FATHER, of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST. Amen.* I make no Reflections at present: but only say: that to me it appears quite surprising, that, in an Age of such Discernment and Freedom of Enquiry, *this Form* is suffered to stand. And, in the Language of your *Collect*, I very heartily pray —*That Almighty God, who alone worketh great Marvels, would send down upon our Bishops and Curates the healthful Spirit of his Grace, the Spirit of Wisdom and Humility!* assured, that this *Stone of Stumbling*, in the Way of *saacious Infidels*, will then quickly be removed.

But to conclude. I have the Pleasure, Sir, to be persuaded that your Mind is not *now* filled with those *swelling and bigb Thoughts* of the Excellence of your *Liturgy*, as when our Correspondence open'd. *Dissenters*, you find, are not the only Persons who except strongly against your Forms. Many of your learned *Clergy* have, in a candid and respectful Manner, and yet with a becoming Courage, express'd great Dissatisfaction with them. What *Effect* their Attempt for the Enlargement of the Church's Bounds, and for a further *Reformation and Review* will produce: Time alone must shew. Upon the Foot it at present stands, the Church's Situation, to every discerning Person, must appear extremely *critical* and uncertain.

It is *difficult* to defend it against the *crafty Attacks* of **POPERY** on the one Hand; and, I think, actually *impossible* to support it against the *Assaults* of **INFIDELITY** on the other. Betwixt these *two Stones*, is there no Room to apprehend its being quickly *ground to Powder*? to the *injurious Idea* which many of your *Forms* give of the *Christian Religion*, the unhappy Increase of *Deism* is, undoubtedly, in great Measure owing.

owing. And increase it further will, there is the highest Reason to believe, if these *Forms* which are the just Offence and Ridicule of *Unbelievers*, are not timely dismiss'd. But when those who now boast themselves the *Successors* of the Apostles, and the only regular *Pastors* and *Ministers* of Christ, shall give Proof that they are possessed of a truly *apostolic* Virtue, and shal no longer seek their own, but the *Things of JESUS CHRIST*; a Review will be no distant, nor difficult Event.

In the mean Time, *Dissenters* have the Satisfaction to reflect; that amidst various Discouragements, they have, by their *Dissent*, approved themselves LOYAL to the only SOVEREIGN of the Church, and FAITHFUL to a sacred Trust committed to them by GOD, for which they must give Account. They rejoice in the Review, that they have entered their Protest against the *Impositions* and *Inventions* of Men; which have corrupted the Simplicity, enervated the Vigour, deformed the Beauty and broken the Communion of the Body of Christ. And whatever rash Censures they may happen to incur from the *prejudic'd*, the *weak*, and the *interested* now: They, with great Assurance hope, to be not only *approved* but *applauded* by their JUDGE; and to receive, at his appearing, Honour proportion'd to their present *Reproach*.

When, it shall please the Almighty Sovereign to awaken in the Christian World a Spirit of genuine CHRISTIANITY—When true HONOUR shall prevail over Cowardice and Temporizing; and INTEGRITY and TRUTH over Falshood and Error—When that slavish ignoble Principle, *that we are to conform to the establish'd Worship of the Country where we dwell, whatever it be*, shall be held in deserv'd Reproach; a Principle that debases greatly and corrupts the human Soul; puts out its intellectual Eye; chains up its noblest Powers; robs it of its highest Glory, viz. the Searching into religious Subjects, and offering to its CREATOR a reasonable Service; in short, a Principle that directly tends to banish every Thing that deserves the Name of Religion;

ligion ; to drive all Truth, and Honour, and Honesty, from amongst Men ; that will justify a Man's professing himself a Mahometan at Constantinople, a Pagan at Pe-king, a Papist at Rome— When this infamous and base Principle, I say, shall be treated with just Contempt ; and Men shall be every where disposed, to seek with Impartiality, and to practise without Disguise RIGH-TOUSNESS and TRUTH— Then, Sir, will the Character of a *rational* DISSENTER be had in universal Honour. Then will such appear to have been the only *consistent* Protestants ; the true Patrons of Christian Liberty, Church-Unity, and Catholick Communion ; and the only Body of Christians upon whom the Guilt of Schism does not really rest ; because they open their Communion to every sincere Christian ; and require no Terms, but what CHRIST and his Apostles have required in the Church. If you will not throw in your Lot, and share with them in those Honours ; you must e'en take your own Way. However, rest assured that

I am,



With due Affection and Esteem,

SIR,

Yours, &c.

A DISSENTER.

